Recent Earthquake in U.P. Himalayas

41. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recent earthquake which has devastated life in U.P. has sounded a warning that Himalayan eco-system is primed for disaster; and

(b) if so, the steps being contemplated to meet the situation and examine the implication of the latest developments in the Himalayan region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Himalayan region falls under high intensity seismic zones where earthquakes of magnitude 8.0 and above on the Richter scale have occurred causing extensive damage. Possibility of an earthquake of this magnitude in future cannot be ruled out. However, prediction of location and time of the occurrence of an earthquake is not possible with the present techniques for making advance preparations.

Deployment of Army in Punjab

42. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to deploy army in the terrorist-infested border areas of Punjab in view of forthcoming elections and also in view of current spate of killings;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the activities of terrorists in Punjab have increased during the past few months;

(d) if so, the number of persons killed by terrorists in Punjab during September and October this year; and

(e) the steps contemplated by Government to deal with the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) and (b) Army units are in Punjab and extend assistance to the civilian administration whenever required.

(c) and (d) Terrorist activities have been continuing in the State and during the months of September and October this year 235 and 303 persons respectively have been killed.

(e) Security agencies are taking appropriate action to deal with the situation in Punjab.

Stategy to counter militants activities in Punjab

43. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Punjab Government has evolved a two-pronged strategy to counter the activities of the militants in Punjab;

(b) if so, whether the activities of the militants have increased in the last few months;

(c) whether Government have received any requests for deployment of army in the State in the wake of militants' activities; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): (a) and (b) Several measures have been adopted by the Government of Punjab to counter the activities of militants in the State